

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Bosslift brings employers to military training

By Sgt. Mark VanGerpen
SDNG Service Member & Family Support

CAMP RIPLEY, Minn. – Seven employers from eastern South Dakota got the chance to see their military employees in uniform during the South Dakota Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Bosslift, Aug. 6-7, at Camp Ripley, Minnesota.

The two-day event brought the employers onto the training ground of the South Dakota National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, during the unit's two-week annual training.

There, the employers witnessed the unit going through battle drills, simulating artillery fire missions and performing maintenance on their vehicles as the Soldiers brushed up on their wartime skills.

They also practiced military weapons familiarization and convoy operations in the Guard's computerized training systems, and rode in a Humvee at a dusty training site.

The idea was to give the employers a better understanding of their employees' roles in the military, and to answer some of the questions about what exactly those Soldiers do when they leave work for training or deployment.

"The intent of the Bosslift program is to acquaint employers of Guard and Reserve members with what their Guard or Reserve members do when they're away on some kind of training," said Ron Mielke, state chair, South Dakota ESGR. "It makes it a lot easier for the employer to understand that they're not just going away for two weeks to have fun, but they've got realistic training that helps them be able to do their job better, to be safe, to prepare them to do their mission in a wartime environment and come home safe."

The amount of work that Soldiers put in during their required training periods surprised some of the employers, who aren't always familiar with the specifics of their employees' military jobs.

"It was an amazing opportunity to come see this," said Brandi Neuman, production manager at Sioux Steel in Sioux Falls, S.D. "I had no idea what actually went on when (my employee) left for his training. It really opened my eyes to how much work and coordination goes into this, on every level. I'm glad I got to do it."

ESGR, which regularly hosts Bosslifts across the nation, also uses the events to educate military bosses on their rights and responsibilities as military employers, and connects them with hiring tools like the Hero2Hired program to find more service members with suitable skills for their businesses.

“I’m looking for my company to grow, and it’s nice to have (military) people like the one that I have,” said Dana Melius, owner of Melius Manufacturing. “He’s on time, he’s happy to be there, has a good attitude. It’s nice having that sort of dependability. That’s the biggest thing that’s piqued my interest – you can always find help, but it’s tougher finding good help in a dependable labor pool.”

During the Bosslift, the employers pledged their support to their Guard and Reserve members through the signing of statements of support. Additionally, Neuman received the Patriot Award, recognizing her for her outstanding support of her employee’s participation in the National Guard.

On the military side, unit members and leadership said they appreciated having their employers visit the training and all the support they receive from their bosses on a regular basis.

“We had a great bunch of bosses,” said Capt. Chad Wika, administrative officer, 1-147th. “It was a great time (for employers) to interact with Soldiers, to see them training, to get them involved in some of the training with the simulators ... It’s a good chance to have a dialogue with an employer and build a stronger relationship with them.”

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard



140806-Z-LN227-038: Dirk Charlson, right, and Myron Palma, both employers of military members, practice engaging the enemy at a weapons familiarization simulator during the South Dakota Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Bosslift, Aug. 6, 2014, at Camp Ripley, Minn. Charlson and Palma were two of seven employers who visited their military employees with the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery during the unit’s two-week annual training. The Bosslift is a two-day event that acquaints military employers with some of the training and tasks required of their employees during periods of military service. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Mark VanGerpen/Released)



140806-Z-LN227-065: U.S. Army Capt. Chad Wika, administrative officer, South Dakota Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, leads a group of seven military employers on a virtual convoy trainer during the South Dakota Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Bosslift, Aug. 6, 2014, at Camp Ripley, Minn. The employers visited their military employees with 1-147th during the unit’s two-week annual training. The Bosslift is a two-day event that acquaints military employers with some of the training and tasks required of their employees during periods of military service. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Mark VanGerpen/ Released)



140806-Z-LN227-147: Members of the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, work through a leader reaction course challenge during the South Dakota Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Bosslift, Aug. 6, 2014, at Camp Ripley, Minn. The event brought seven military employers to Camp Ripley to visit their military employees with 1-147th during the unit’s two-week annual training. The Bosslift is a two-day event that acquaints military employers with some of the training and tasks required of their employees during periods of military service. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Mark VanGerpen/ Released)



140806-Z-LN227-082: Seven military employers from eastern South Dakota attended the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Bosslift, Aug. 6, 2014, at Camp Ripley, Minn. The event brought the employers to Camp Ripley to visit their military employees with the South Dakota Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery during the unit's two-week annual training. The Bosslift is a two-day event that acquaints military employers with some of the training and tasks required of their employees during periods of military service. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Mark VanGerpen/ Released)



140806-Z-LN227-112: Brandi Neuman, second from left, production manager at Sioux Steel, receives a Patriot Award for her support of the National Guard during the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Bosslift, Aug. 6, 2014, at Camp Ripley, Minn. The award was presented to her by Ron Mielke, far left, state chair of South Dakota ESGR, for her support of Sgt. Scott Schurch, second from right, a planner at Sioux Steel and a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery. The Bosslift is a two-day event that acquaints military employers with some of the training and tasks required of their employees during periods of military service. Also pictured is Lt. Col. Doug Bogenhagen, commander of the 1-147th. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Mark VanGerpen/ Released)

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